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THE
COUNTRY CLERGYMAN'S
A D V I C E
TO HIS
PARISHIONERS,

EXPLAINING
That They are to BELIEVE, and
DO, in order to be SAVED.

ADDRESSED chiefly to those who are of the
YOUNGER SORT.



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THE
CLERK

D V I C E

TO HIS

MAJESTY

OF GREAT BRITAIN

AND OF IRELAND

IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

FOR THE PURPOSE

OF THE BETTER



BEFORE THE
COMMONS OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND OF IRELAND
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY



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T O T H E
R E A D E R.

ALTHOUGH this little Book is designed for the use of a particular Parish, for those especially of the Younger Sort in it, bred mostly to labour, and in a low station of life, yet it may not be unprofitable to all Persons, who are seriously disposed, and will dispense with the plainness and simplicity of style, in which it is wrote. Whether the present Age is worse than the foregoing, is not easy, nor very material, to determine. It is enough to say, and more, one would wish, than need be said, that Books of this kind are never unreasonable. If this is as well accepted as it is

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meant,

meant, it will not fail of producing good effects. If it shall give occasion to any one good action, or thought it will not be entirely fruitless; but, if it shall contribute to the saving a Soul from Death, the Author will have great reason to bless God that he hath thus bestowed some part of his time.

As he hereby shews a charitable inclination to promote the Salvation of others, let them return the obligation, by making his endeavours effectual; that so He, by Their means as well as They, by His, may, thro the mercies of God to both, and the merits of His Blessed Son, our Redeemer, be everlastingly happy in the world to come.



THE
COUNTRY PARSON'S
A D V I C E.

Children, Beloved in the Lord!

AS it has pleased Almighty God to call me, although greatly unworthy, to take care of some part of his Holy Church, so am I firmly persuaded, that He will one day require at my hands an account how I have discharged this trust. That I may not appear then wholly wanting in the performance of my duty, I take this method of addressing myself to You, putting every one of You in remembrance of the engagements Ye are under by Baptism; explaining to You, in a familiar way, the whole belief and practice of a Christian; and exhorting You to the performance of every Christian duty. And God is my witness, that I am very desirous that all of You, as

You grow in years, may grow in Grace; that
Ye may all know God from the least to the
greatest, and obey Him as Ye ought, living and
becometh Christians, and shining as lights in
the world.

REMEMBER then, my dear Children, that
there was once a time, when each of You was
brought to God in Baptism, being entered into
Christ's Church, by the sprinkling of water, as
He Himself has appointed. The sprinkling of
water may seem to You as a thing in itself of
but small account, and so indeed it is; but in
Baptism it is a Matter of the utmost concern
insomuch as they who wilfully neglect it, have
no sort of title to the promises made to mankind
in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; for He has been
pleased to make it the ordinary means of ad-
mitting persons into His Church; and therefore
without it, no one can be said to be in cove-
nant with God, or to have any assurance or hope
of being saved. *Except a man be born of Wa-
ter, and of the Spirit, says our blessed Saviour,
he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* John iii.
5. and, in another place, *He that believeth, and
is baptized, shall be saved.* Mark xvi. 16. For
this reason Ye were baptized, when as yet Ye
were infants; and from the beginning it has
been a custom in the Church to do the same
for our fore-fathers thought very justly, that
it could never be too early to enter into covenant
with God; and, provided any security could be
given, that Children, when grown up, should
be taught what had been done for them, and in

struck

instructed how to perform the engagements which
 were entered into in their names, it seemed to
 them most expedient to admit such to Baptism,
 though they themselves were not capable of
 fulfilling the terms of it. This gave occasion
 for the requiring sureties, or what we call God-
 fathers and Godmothers, in Infant Baptism; per-
 sons who have been baptised themselves, and are
 of good and pious conversation in the Church.
 These undertake to teach the children they have
 answered for at the time of Baptism, as soon as
 they are able to learn, what a solemn vow, pro-
 mise, and profession, they have made by them-
 selves and their Sureties. They are to instruct them in the
 nature of Baptism, and the obligations they are
 under thereby; They are to exhort them to hear
 frequently the word of God; They are to see
 that they are taught to read and understand the
 Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Com-
 mandments, in their own Mother Tongue; and,
 finally, They are to take care that they be virtu-
 ously brought up, to lead a Godly and a Chri-
 stian Life.

THESE instructions, I trust, Ye have all of
 You received from Your own Godfathers and
 Godmothers, or from Your Parents at least,
 whose Duty it is also to give You them. Permit
 me to join with them in this good work, as, by
 God's appointment, I also have a share with them
 in the care of Your Souls. *Simon, saith our
 blessed Saviour, lovest thou me more than these? He
 saith unto Him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love
 thee. He then saith unto him, feed my Lambs.*

John

John xxi. 15. The teaching Youth the ground of Christianity, and instilling into them the principles of it in their tender years, is, it seems, necessary consequence of the love of Christ, and the principal duty of the Ministers of his Church. And besides the Benefit which You yourself may receive from me in this labour of love, may not be unprofitable perhaps to those of your years, who, when they see the instruction here given to You, may be led to reflect upon themselves, and may from hence take occasion of ordering their Lives more suitably to the Christian calling.

FIRST then let me, in a few words, acquaint You with the nature and advantages of that most Holy Religion into which Ye are baptised. It is a Religion built upon the surest foundation, not less than the hopes and expectations of good men in all ages; the testimony of Prophecies even from the beginning of the World; and the actual Revelation which God was pleased to make of Himself to mankind, by sending His blessed Son to dwell amongst them, who, in their flesh, and with their infirmities, but without sin, did, for some space of time, wholly employ Himself in teaching them the way to everlasting Life, confirming the truth of what He said by many miracles and wonders, which no one could have wrought, except he had been sent from God. This Holy Person, called in Scripture the Word of God, who, in the Beginning, was with God and was God; by Whom the World is said to have been made, and all things therein; and

He was of such high dignity that He thought
 no robbery to be equal with God; this Holy
 Son, I say, did constantly and openly teach all
 men, wherever He came, that there would be
 certainly a future state of rewards and pu-
 nishments, to which all men, in all parts of the
 earth, from the beginning of the World to the
 end of it, shall be called by a general Resurre-
 ction of their bodies from the dead, and shall
 stand at the seat of His Judgment, to receive
 their sentence from Him, according to what
 they have done in their flesh, whether it be good
 or evil. Farther, he taught them that there was
 a way of being reconciled to God, but thro'
 the merit of His blood; that God's anger against them for the
 transgression of their first parents, and their own
 actual sins, cannot be pacified by any thing
 which they of themselves can do, but only by a
 steadfast belief in Him and His doctrines, and by
 sincere and willing obedience to His com-
 mands. That although Repentance doth make
 amends for faults that are past, and there-
 fore is of no value in the sight of God, yet, if
 it be sincere, and not too long delayed, it will be accept-
 ed through faith in Him, and through the me-
 rit of His sufferings and death. That hereby
 all sins will be forgiven to Men, be they ever so
 many, or ever so often repeated. That whatso-
 ever they shall ask of God, faithfully, and in His
 name, shall be granted unto them. That, as he
 offered Himself a sacrifice and atonement for the
 sins of Men, so He would continue to the end of
 the world, a Mediator for them with God, al-
 ways

ways soliciting their pardon. And that dur
His absence from them, and whilst He was e
ployed in this good and charitable office,
would cause the Holy Spirit of God to re
amongst them, assisting and comforting them
der all the trials and temptations of this mo
state, and preparing them for an eternal stat
happiness and glory.

THIS is the sum and substance of the C
stian Profession. And blessed be God's H
Name, who has given You an opportunit
taking it upon You. Make it your confi
prayer to God, that He would be pleased to
dow You with that wisdom which is from abo
that he would enlighten Your minds with
knowledge of Your duty, and give You grac
practise it; that so Ye may lead Your wh
lives answerably to this profession, and fin
obtain the promise of everlasting life.

BUT, to be more particular, if Ye w
learn farther what are the benefits Ye reap fr
being Christians, Ye will find them very bri
and fully summed up in the Catechism of
Church, which ye were once taught to rep
and do now, I hope, thoroughly understand.
is there said; that by Baptism Ye are m
Members of Christ, Children of God, and
heritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. Th
are privileges so great and glorious, that hu
nature may well be thought incapable of th
But so far has it pleased Almighty God to
mindful of Man, and so much has His
abounded towards us in Christ Jesus, that

most certainly in possession of all these advantages so long as Ye behave in all things as cometh Christians.

In the first place, Ye are members of Christ, united, not to His natural body, for that were a thing impossible, but to His spiritual body, which is the Church; that congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments are duly administered, according to Christ's Ordinance. This Society of Men our blessed Saviour is pleased to call His body, of which He Himself is the Head. *The Church*, says St. Paul, *is the Body of Christ, and Christ is the head of the body, the Church.* Eph. i. 23. Colos. i. 18. And as the Members of the natural body, being united to the Head, do receive life, and sense, and motion from thence, Christians, as Members of the Church, being united to Christ, do receive spiritual life and motion from Him. *By Him all the Body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.* Colos. 19. Again, *as the body, that is, the natural body, is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one Body, being many, yet are but one Body, so also is Christ, that is the Church of Christ, for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body.* And, *as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same offices, so we, being many, are one Body in Christ.* Rom. xii. 4. 5. Now therefore Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 1 Cor. xii. 7. Now, by being Members of Christ, Ye are assured

assured that Ye are continually under the most especial care and direction of God's holy Spirit, that as the Head contrives and orders every thing for the support and welfare of the Members, Your own bodies, so does Christ Your Head always watch over and preserve You. Nay, Ye are now become particular objects of His tenderness and pity; for, as in Your own bodies when any one of the members is hurt, the head suffers with it, so is Christ, Your head, concerned in all your afflictions, and will either deliver You out of them, or support You under them, and in the end turn them to Your advantage. Now if this is the case of those who are happy as to be members of Christ, consider the deplorable state of such persons as remain excluded from the Christian Church, notwithstanding the frequent opportunities they have had of entering into it. As they have not yet put on Christ, most certain it is that they are still dead in their sins. And although they may possibly do good works, yet not being first reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, their goodness is nothing worth. Consider likewise the still more deplorable state of such persons, who having entered into covenant with God by Baptism, do afterwards divide themselves from the Church of Christ, and cut themselves off from that body of which they were members. Such are they, if any such there be, who have entirely renounced their Christianity: Such are they also who have wholly abandoned and given up themselves to a wicked course of life.

In the first ages of the Christian Church it was usual to cut off such members from the body of Christ by excommunication; that is, they were turned out of the Church for a time, and not suffered to communicate with other Christians, until they had repented of their faults. This power was given to His Church by Christ Himself, when he tells His Apostles that *whatsoever they bound on earth, should be bound in heaven, and, whatsoever they loosed on earth, should be loosed in heaven.* Matt. xvi. 19. The Church, at present, is cautious and tender in the use of this authority, more so perhaps than is consistent with its own peace, or the good of Souls. But wicked and profligate Men, although they are suffered to continue in the Church, are by no means members of Christ's Body; no more than a dry withered branch is a part of the vine, because it is not cut off from the vine; or a dead, mortified, limb is a part of the body, because it is not separated from the body. As they are grown useless, being past feeling, they are an encumbrance to the body, and may probably do great hurt to it, but they cannot themselves receive any benefit from it; for they are not vitally united to Christ, who is the Head of it, and therefore they do not partake of the influences of His Grace, neither are they quickened by His holy Spirit. Finally, Consider that as Ye are now become members of Christ's body, the Church, by Baptism, Ye ought not only to reverence Christ, who is your Head, but also to love one another. The members of your own bodies

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teach You this useful lesson; for they never abuse nor injure one another; on the contrary, if any one of the members is hurt, all the rest immediately join in comforting and cherishing it. And so it should be amongst Christians, of the members of Christ's body. According to the Apostle, *All the members should have the same care one for another; and, whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.* 1 Cor. xii. 25. 26. For think with Yourselfes how unnatural it would be for a Man to hurt himself, how strange, if the hand should strike the foot, or the foot should trample upon the hand. But so it is with Christians, when they envy or quarrel with one another; if one member is hurt, the whole body is wounded, and the Head is grieved; that is, the Church of Christ is disgraced, and Christ, who is the Head of it, is angered thereby. There is now then so close a union amongst You, that, out of very self-interest, Ye ought to do good one to another, for if Ye are not at peace with one another, ye are divided against Yourselfes. It may be said very properly of You in Your present situation, that *the merciful Man doth good to his own Soul, and he that is cruel, troubleth his own flesh.* Prov. xi. 17. For He amongst You who assists another is nearly related to him, that he may be said to be a benefactor to himself; and he that injures another may, upon the same account, be said to be his own enemy.

BUT to proceed, Secondly, Ye are not only Members of Christ, but Ye are likewise the Children of God, another privilege which Ye receive by Baptism. Now here Ye must consider what it is to be a Child of God. As God created all Mankind, they may be said in some sense to be the Children of God; but Ye are the Children of God in an higher sense, as He has adopted You, and chosen You out of the rest of the world, taking You into His more particular favour. Those who never were baptized, although they had an opportunity of being so, are children of God's wrath, obstinate, and disobedient, continuing still in sin, and under the curse: But Ye have recovered the favour of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, being obedient to His will; and although by nature Ye were strangers and enemies to God, yet now, by Baptism, Ye are taken into the family of God, and are entitled, by His good pleasure, to all His mercies and blessings. *Ye are all the children of God, says the Apostle, by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ; and if Ye be Christ's, then are Ye Abraham's seed, and heirs, according to the Promise.* Gal. iii. 26. 27. 29. And again, *As many, says He, as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God. For Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God; and, if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs of Christ, if so be that*

we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. Rom. viii. 14. 15. 16. 17. Hence our blessed Saviour is said to give power to as many as received Him, to become the Sons of God. Joh. i. 12. *And He is not ashamed,* according to the Apostle to the Hebrews, *to call them brethren,* Heb. ii. 11. as we find he does in many parts of the holy Scriptures. This it is to be the children of God, and thus well are Ye assured that all of You are such. Consider then the honour to which Ye are advanced: Ye have the same Father with Christ Himself, who is God blessed for ever. Ye are not only members of Christ's body therefore, but in some respect equal to Christ Himself. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that Ye should be called the Sons of God.* 1 Joh. iii. 1. Hereby Ye are assured that God will bear with the untowardness of Your nature, will pity Your infirmities, and favourably hear Your requests; that He will supply Your wants, reward Your well-doings, and gently correct Your miscarriages, which are all acts of fatherly affection. Your fathers here on earth bear a love and affection for You, beyond what Ye Yourself ever felt or can conceive; judge then what bowels of compassion, what pity and tenderness, Your heavenly Father has for You, whose creatures Ye are; who is all goodness as He has all power, and is as willing to bless You as He is capable of so doing. Consider also the duty that lies upon You, by being made the children of God. At the same time that Ye obey Your earthly parents, remember that Ye have

have a Father also in heaven. Make it Your
 chief business to please Him, for He is Your
 best Friend. Do not oblige or excuse Your-
 selves to Your parents here by any thing which
 we know will be offensive to Your heavenly Fa-
 ther; neither make mention of the name of
 God lightly, and in Your ordinary discourse, for
 His name is holy, and must not come into Your
 mouths upon any but solemn occasions, when
 we beg of him to relieve Your wants, or return
 Him thanks for His blessings, or are saying
 something which tends to the advancement of
 His honour and glory. Do nothing, in short,
 which is sinful, for thereby Ye not only offend
 the Majesty of Almighty God, but abuse the
 Goodness of a most loving and tender Father.
 Again, consider the bad state of those who are
 not of God's family. Do not despise or insult
 them, who, by being not baptized, are not re-
 ceived to God's Favour, but look upon them as
 unhappy Children, who are forsaken and turned
 out of doors, as it were, by Your heavenly Fa-
 ther, because of their disobedience. Endeavour
 to reconcile them to God, if possibly You can,
 by faith and repentance. Bring them home
 from that strange country, where they are now
 wandering, naked, and almost starved, feeding
 upon husks with swine, and endeavour to lay
 them in the bosom of Your Father, always open
 to receive them, that they may live in the king-
 dom of the Gospel, and be fed with the bread
 of life. Have compassion for all men, and let
 be Your constant prayer to Your heavenly
 Father,

Father, that, in His good time, he would bring the whole world into His Family, the Church; that, with one mouth as dutiful Children, we may all glorify Him here, and be glorified by Him, as His blessed Children, hereafter.

AND this leads me, thirdly, to consider another benefit Ye have received by being Baptized; namely, that thereby Ye are made Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. *If children, says the Apostle, then, heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* Rom. viii. 17. This Inheritance it seems, is the necessary consequence of Your being Children of God. It will be well worth Your while therefore to know what this inheritance is, what that Kingdom of Heaven, of which Ye are made heirs by Baptism. Now St. Paul tells You, *that Ye are justified by God's Grace, thereby Ye may be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.* Tit. iii. 7. And St. Peter says that *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we are begotten to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.* 1 Pet. i. 3. 4. The Apostle to the Hebrews likewise tells You, *that Christ is heir of all things,* Heb. i. 2. and in another place, *that we are joint heirs with Christ.* Rom. viii. 17. Whence it may be concluded, that Ye have a title to the joys and glories of heaven for which the word of God Himself is Your security, and His holy Spirit Your assistance in obtaining them. What the joys of heaven are, which Ye are heirs, is beyond the capacity of the mind of Man to conceive, and therefore the

cannot be described. It is sufficient for You to know, what the Gospel hath revealed, that in heaven there will be no more sorrow, no temptation, nor fears, nor death ; That, on the contrary, Ye will be perpetually entertained with the wonders of God's glory, and delighted with the contemplations of His goodness ; that Your minds will be filled with holy joy, and that You will be thoroughly satisfied with Your happy state, and so continue for ever. This is the inheritance of a Christian. And as Ye ever hope to succeed to it, prepare Yourselfes for it, remembering that without Holiness no man shall see the Lord. Let the joy which is set before You, encourage You to press forward, and make it Your utmost care that Ye do not lose that noble prize that is proposed to You as the reward of Your labours. As Your treasure is in heaven, so let Your hearts be there also. Be not ever solicitous concerning the things of this world. Be not afraid of it's troubles, nor fond of it's vanities. Do not greedily seek after, or contend about honour, wealth, or any of those trifles, which the children of this world are fond of. For yet a little while, and all these things shall be removed out of Your sight. This world, with all the pomp and splendor of it, shall vanish away, and a new scene of affairs shall be opened, worthy Your attention. In the progress of Your lives, Ye will meet perhaps with many Christians, who seem to have forgot that they are heirs of the kingdom of heaven. All their thoughts seem to be employed in making provision

vision for this life, as though it were accounted but lost time which is spent in securing or advancing their interest in the life to come. And these men, by some, are called wise and prudent; but be assured of this, that there can be no greater instance of human folly: For they die in the midst of these their worldly cares, are snatched from their estates here, and are in danger of losing the inheritance, which was designed for them hereafter. Let it be Your chief business to secure Your best, and dearest interest. Seek first, the kingdom of God and his righteousness; for it matters but little what Your circumstances are in this life, if so be that Ye take good heed, lest Ye be disinherited in the life to come. *For the things, that are seen, are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.* 2 Cor. iv. 18.

HITHERTO I have set before You the great privileges and advantages, of the Christian profession, into which Ye are baptized; and have taken occasion to add a word of advice, at the conclusion of every particular. And, although the hopes of a Christian are so valuable, that, one would think, he should want nothing else to prompt and oblige him to a steady performance of his duty, yet I must put You in mind, that it is not only Your interest to live in obedience to the Gospel of Christ, but Ye are bound by a solemn declaration and vow, made at the time of Your receiving Baptism, that Ye will so do. Ye did then promise, by Your Godfathers and Godmothers, that Ye would renounce the Devil, and all his Works; the pomps and vanities of this wicked

icked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.
 that Ye would believe all the Articles of the
 Christian faith. And that Ye would keep God's
 Will and Commandments, and walk in the
 same all the days of Your life. This is called the
 baptismal Vow, which, being made for You,
 in Your names, it lies upon You to per-
 form, as it is indeed Your concern, and in Your
 power alone to do it.

Now, in the first place, Ye have promised to
 renounce the Devil, and all his works. And very
 true it is that every Christian should make this
 declaration at his Baptism. For St. *John* says,
for this purpose was God manifested, that he might
try the works of the devil. 1 Joh. iii. 8. That
 the Kingdom of Christ was set up in oppo-
 sition to the kingdom of that evil Spirit; and
 therefore it is necessary that Christians, or the
 subjects of Christ's kingdom, should enter into
 engagement to be faithful to Him; and to
 defiance to the Devil, and all the stratagems
 he makes use of, to seduce Men from their obe-
 dience to God. By listing Yourself under the
 banners of Christ, and promising to renounce
 the Devil and all his works, Ye have given as-
 surance to the Church, that Ye will, in no wise,
 maintenance and support the growing power of
 him; that Ye will, on the contrary, by Your own
 examples, and by every other method of which
 Ye are capable, endeavour to subdue it, and hin-
 der it from prevailing in the world. Ye have de-
 clared that Ye will always oppose it, in every
 age, and under every denomination, so far as
 becometh fitting Your respective stations; and that
 Ye

Ye will maintain an utter abhorrence of every thing which Ye know to be displeasing to God.

THAT Ye may faithfully discharge this Promise suffer me to give You a few plain directions. Let it remain deeply imprinted in Your minds, as an infallible truth, that, of all evils which happen to mankind, Sin is the greatest. Poverty, Sickness, and Death, are called evils because they are grievous to be born, and therefore we have a natural abhorrence of them; but they are really not such, being often attended with good and happy consequences. But Sin brings with it regret of mind, which makes us uneasy here, and draws after it a sure destruction of our Souls, which will make us for ever miserable hereafter. Sin therefore is truly an evil, and the only one Ye can reasonably stand in dread of. If Ye can preserve yourselves from it, or, at least, sincerely endeavour to do it, Ye have nothing to apprehend from the displeasure of God, or the wicked designs of Men, or the malice and subtilty of the Devil. But remember, that, as great an evil as Sin is, and, as fatal as it may be to Your souls, yet Your very nature, Ye are most strongly inclined to it, especially some kinds of it, which, with Your utmost constancy and resolution, Ye will find it a difficult matter to resist. Never trust therefore to Your own strength, but pray to God daily, that, with the power of His Grace he would be pleased to assist Your endeavours, and give success to the means which Ye make use of, for the preservation of Your innocence. More particularly make it your humble request

Almighty God, that he would protect You from the danger of falling into those Sins, which are properly Sins of the Devil, as he seems more specially concerned in tempting Men to them, and from whence therefore he takes his name. Such are Lying, Slandering, Pride, and Revenge; Sins, in which the foundation of the Devil's kingdom was laid, and to which the increase of it in the world is chiefly owing. These Sins, by this part of Your Baptismal Vow, Ye are chiefly engaged to guard against; and be assured that, although the power of Your ghostly enemy is very great, God will enable You to resist it, if Ye do humbly ask His help and protection. If Ye draw nigh unto God, he will draw nigh unto You; and, when Ye perceive Yourselves inwardly strengthened by God's holy Spirit, be sure to obey the motions and directions of it; so will he continue in You, and dwell with You, and effectually deliver You from all temptation.

SECONDLY, by Your Baptismal Vow, Ye have engaged to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. The world is called wicked, tho' made by the power of God, and governed by His providence, because, through the lusts and passions of men, it administers to You many occasions of falling into sin. Hence it is that the apostle declares, that *Christ gave Himself for our Sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world.* Gal. i. 4. And our Blessed Saviour, for the same reason, bids us *not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world; for, if any man loves the world, says He, the love of the Father is not in him.* 1 Joh. ii. 15. The pomps and

vanities of the world are all those things which in the eyes of sinful Men, seem desirable, though there is no real goodness in them, nor any true satisfaction arising from them. Still more particularly are Riches, and Honours, which every good Christian should forswear and renounce, as not to be covetous of the one, or ambitious of the other. By the pomps of the world, it is probable, that the expensive, and barbarous and obscene sports, made use of by the Heathens, in honour of their Deities, were principally meant; and accordingly, in the primitive times of Christianity, it was not lawful for a Christian to be present at such entertainments. But the words do likewise denote all that excess of every kind, which men, in high station more particularly, are betrayed into by their vanity and pride. Magnificence, and grandeur, if truly such, are not unbecoming; and are perhaps necessary to, some stations of life. But extravagance and luxury, in every station, are follies of pernicious consequence, serving no other purpose but to draw off the thoughts of Men from religious duties, and to alienate their minds from God. These vanities therefore Ye have renounced in Baptism, as destructive of Christianity. Ye have vowed that Ye will not exceed the bounds of moderation, the rules of sobriety, in the enjoyment of the things of this life; that Ye will not set Your hearts upon them, nor be greedily desirous of them; that Ye will rather learn to despise them, especially when they come into competition with Your future hopes; and, that Ye will stea

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pursue Your only true interest, that of the Sal-
 vation of Your Souls, notwithstanding the temp-
 tations, which may be laid in Your way, to se-
 duce and divert You from it. Even the inno-
 cent pleasures of life Ye are so far resolved
 against, that they shall not employ too much of
 Your time, lest they should take possession of
 Your minds, and cause You to contract such a
 fondness for the world, that Ye cannot part with
 it without great reluctance. Ye have vowed,
 in short, to set Your affections on things above,
 though Ye do take a reasonable satisfaction, as
 Ye ought to do, in the conveniencies, and bless-
 ings of life; and that Ye are ready to resign
 them most willingly, whensoever it shall please
 God to take them from You, or You from
 them, being prepared, and glad to exchange
 them for that everlasting happiness, which is the
 prize of Your high calling in Christ Jesus.

THIRDLY, in Baptism, Ye have renounced
 the sinful lusts of the flesh. By which part
 of Your vow Ye have engaged Yourselfes to
 regulate, and govern, all those appetites and in-
 clinations, which belong to You as men, and
 are implanted in Your nature for very good and
 lawful purposes. The lusts, or desires of the flesh,
 are not given to Men for no other purpose,
 than that they might be so many snares and
 temptations to them. Far be it from us to
 think so unworthily of the Goodness of God.
 But, it is necessary to the present state of things,
 that Ye should be so framed; and these disposi-
 tions, under a proper restraint, are, no doubt, of

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singular use to You in Your present situation. The affairs of the world could not be carried on without them, and the counsels of Providence in creating it, would be frustrated otherwise, and made of none effect. But when these appetites and desires are suffered to exceed their proper bounds, when they govern, instead of being in subjection, then do they become sinful lusts of the flesh, and such as Ye have declared Yourself to be at enmity with. Hence proceed drunkenness, gluttony, fornication, adultery, strife, envyings, murders, and the like. These, with many others, are called by *St. Paul* *the works of the flesh*, Col. iii. 5. &c. and all such works Ye have declared an abhorrence of. Ye have vowed, that, by the help of God's Grace, Ye will not do them Yourself, nor in any wise contribute to the doing of them, by giving encouragement or countenance to others. That Ye may be the better able to perform this promise, let me advise You carefully to observe what sins of this kind Ye are mostly inclined to. And although, with the Apostle, *Ye are assured that in Your flesh dwelleth no good thing*, Rom. vii. 15. yet let it be Your especial care to guard Yourself in the weakest part, where Ye apprehend most danger of being overcome. Avoid every opportunity, as far as in You lies, by which Ye may be enticed to commit any of these sins. In a more particular manner, shun idleness, and sloth, and betake Yourself now in the early time of age, to some honest and useful employment. They that do otherwise

make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, according to the Apostle, Rom. xiii. 14. that is, they give themselves up to intemperance, and loose conversation, the constant companions of an idle life, whereby the lusts of the flesh are fed, and nourished, and so prove unruly, and past controul.

AND let this suffice for the first part of Your Baptismal Vow, whereby Ye promise to renounce the Devil, and all his works; the pomps, and vanities of this wicked world; and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Ye have declared in the second place, that Ye will believe all the Articles of the Christian faith.

To believe a thing is to be well persuaded of the truth of it. And, although it is impossible for You to believe what Ye please, yet in promising to believe all the Articles of the Christian faith, Ye do not undertake an impossibility. For they admit of no doubt, because they are the sum and substance of the christian faith, as it stands clearly and plainly described in the holy Scriptures. They are what all members of the Christian Church therefore have generally believed, from the beginning of it to this day, although there have not been wanting such as have disputed concerning the meaning of some terms, in which these articles have been expressed. Now it is Your duty thoroughly to inform Yourself, what these articles of the Christian faith are, and in what sense they are to be understood; and whether Ye Yourself do believe them, as they ought to be believed. In the first

of these particulars, I will endeavour to inform You; in the latter, Ye must inform Yourself; for nobody else is capable of doing it. Whether Ye do truly, and heartily, believe the articles of the Christian faith, is a matter, in which Your own consciences are chiefly concerned. But, I may add, that, if Ye do lead Your lives according to such a belief, Ye have good reason to think that Ye do not deceive Yourself, or others, in this respect. For Christian obedience is the best sign of Christian faith, and if Ye do behave, in every thing, according to the rules of the Gospel, I see no reason to doubt of Your belief of the Gospel.

THESE then are the articles of the Christian faith, and this is the sense in which they are to be believed, as appears to us from the Holy Scriptures.

FIRST, Ye are to believe that there is a God, and but one God only, an eternal Being, infinite in perfection, and the author, and giver, of every thing which is good, and, in any degree, perfect in others; That He has all power in Himself, by which He at first created, and does now support and govern, all things in Heaven and Earth. That He is therefore the God, and Father, of all Men. And Ye do believe that, from all eternity, He was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IN like manner, Ye are to believe, that Jesus Christ was always, from all eternity, the Son of God; That He took the name of Jesus Christ in the flesh, as He was a Person consecrated

ted and anointed of God, for the Redemption and Salvation of Mankind. And, that He thereby became our Lord, as He hath purchased us with His Blood, and, as all power, and authority, is exercised by Him over His Church.

WITH regard to the manner in which the Son of God took our flesh upon Him, and became visible to the world, that He might suffer for it, Ye believe, that He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary; that is, by the power, and operation, of God's Holy Spirit, a Woman was made to conceive, and bring forth, without the ordinary means of Generation, or the concurrence of a man; That from hence our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ hath both a real human Body, and a real human Soul, but without any stain of sin upon either of them, because of the extraordinary, and holy manner, in which He was produced.

YE believe, that the same Holy Person, after preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins, to the world, for some space of time, and, after working many miracles, in confirmation of the truth of what He said, did suffer under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, and descended into hell; That is, at such a precise time, foretold by the Prophets, when the Jews were under the power of the Romans, and Pontius Pilate, a Roman, was their governour, our Blessed Saviour did suffer from the Jews many grievous things, as scourgings, mockings, buffetings, and the like: that His body, whilst He was yet alive, was fixed to a Cross, after the

manner of a criminal; that He did really die upon the Cross; that His body when dead, was taken down thence, and laid in a Grave; and that His soul went into the place appointed for it, during it's state of separation.

YE believe, farther, that the same Jesus Christ, who was crucified, dead, and buried, arose again the third day from the dead; that is, after lying, for that space of time, in the Grave, His soul was restored to His body, and He did leave His sepulchre and did appear alive to many persons, for many days, with the same soul, and body, which He had before He was put to death. And this Ye are to believe, was done by His own Divine Power, by which He was enabled to lay down His life, and take it again.

YE believe also, that He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; That is, when He had abode some time upon earth, after His resurrection, and had conversed frequently with His Disciples, and others, He did, in the presence of many persons, go up from them, with His human soul, and body, becoming invisible to the world from that time, and being advanced to a seat of the greatest Honour, and Glory in heaven.

AND Ye do believe, that He shall there continue, governing, and directing, His Church, and interceding for it with God the Father, until the end of the world, when He shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead. That is, all those who shall be found then alive

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upon the earth, as well as those who are departed out of this Life, shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, at this His second coming, and shall be acquitted or condemned, rewarded or punished, according to what they have done, whether it be good or evil.

FARTHER, as Ye believe in God the Father, and God the Son, so do Ye believe in God the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit, who is the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity, and of the same Divine Nature with the Father, and the Son. He is called in Scripture the Holy Spirit, because it is by His means more especially that all the elect, or chosen people of God are sanctified, or made holy. As Ye believe the Father to have been Your Creator, and the Son Your Redeemer, so Ye believe the Holy Ghost to be Your Helper, and Comforter, in all things, wherein Ye stand in need more particularly of the divine assistance. He enlightens Your understandings, disposes Your wills, and enables You to go through, and perform, every good and religious undertaking. He assists Your prayers, strengthens You against temptations, and enables You to discern the malicious subtilties of the Devil, and the cheats, and delusions of the world, and the flesh. He possesses You with the knowledge of Your true interest, and is ever admonishing and encouraging You in the pursuit of it. Finally, by His sanctifying Power, He unites You, and all good Christians, to Christ Your head, sealing Your Souls with such an inward assurance of God's favour, that Ye

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do firmly hope, and are persuaded in Yourselfes that, through the mercies of God, Ye shall be everlastingly happy in a future state.

AFTER Ye have professed to believe thus in each of the Three Persons of the blessed Trinity, Ye declare also, that there is one Church of Christ, called the Holy Catholick, or universal Church. The Church here meant, is the general assembly of all such, as, from the first publishing of the Gospel to this present time, have believed in Christ, and who hereafter shall do the same, to the end of the world. Ye do profess therefore to believe, that all holy Persons, who have died in the Faith of Christ, and in the Fear of God's Holy Name, do continue Members of Christ's Church, although they are removed out of our sight into a separate State; and that they with all good and pious Christians, now remaining in the world do make but one Church, or Society, as they are united under one and the same Head, Jesus Christ; that they are sanctified by the same Blessed Spirit, and shall one day partake of the same Happiness in the glorious Kingdom of God. Ye do farther profess to believe, that That part of Christ's Church, which is here on Earth shall never entirely cease, but that there shall always be a number of faithful Persons continuing to believe, and practise, as they are taught in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to the end of the world.

YE do also believe, that in this Church of Christ, there is, and always will be, a Communion

union of Saints. That is, that all true Christians, as well those who are departed out of this life, as those who remain in it, have access to God the Father, being in covenant with Him, through Jesus Christ; That they are in Communion also with God the Son, who has purchased them with His Blood, and redeemed them to Himself; and, that they have the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in them, and is their Councillor and Guide; That there is also so far an intercourse between good and holy men on earth, and the angels of God in heaven, as that they have an affectionate regard for them, and delight in ministering to them, whensoever they are commanded so to do. And, finally, Ye believe, that the members of Christ have, and ought to have, communion with one another, not only in prayer, and the ministry of God's Holy Word, and Sacraments, but in love, and charity, and all good works, whereby they can be beneficial to each other.

FARTHER, Ye do believe, that, as members of the Christian Church, Ye have the inestimable Benefit of that most gracious promise of the forgiveness of Sins. That is, that, by the sending His Son into the world, it has pleased Almighty God to issue out a free pardon to all such as shall embrace the terms of His Holy Gospel. That, when all the wisdom of Man could not contrive an expedient, whereby he might hope to be reconciled to God, and when the whole World was sunk into despair, through the

the burthen of their Sins, for which they could make no atonement, it pleased God, in the Bowels of His Mercy, to cause tidings of great Joy to be proclaimed to the wretched Sons of Men, no less than a sure forgiveness of all their Sins by repentance, and faith in Christ Jesus. And, *as there is none other name under Heaven given among Men, by which we must be saved, but only that of the Lord Jesus*, Acts iv. 12. Ye believe that forgiveness of Sins is not to be obtained in any other way than that which the Gospel prescribes; not from any authority which Men may falsely, and presumptuously, arrogate to themselves; not by performing such things as the Gospel does not require You to do, but by a steadfast Faith in Christ Jesus, and a sincere obedience to His Will, and Commandments.

YE do believe also, that there will be a Resurrection of the Dead. That is, that the Bodies of all Men, although now dissolved into dust, from whence they were at first taken, shall be raised from the grave, and their Souls shall be again united to them; And, that the Bodies of the Faithful shall be restored to them in such a glorified State, as to be capable of enjoying Everlasting Happiness; and the Bodies of the Wicked in such a State, as shall make them sensible of Everlasting Misery and Torment.

FOR, finally, Ye do believe that there will be a Life Everlasting. That is, that, after the Resurrection from the Dead, Ye will be translated into a State, where Ye can never die any more, and in which the Good will be happy, and the Wicked miserable to all Eternity.

THIS is the belief of a Christian, according to that Revelation, which God has been pleased to make of Himself in His Son Christ Jesus; the truth of which Ye must be really, and fully, persuaded of, if Ye expect to receive any benefit from being Baptised in His Name. And, as these Things are to be believed, so likewise are there many things to be done, in order to accomplish the Eternal Salvation of Your Souls. For, lastly, Ye do promise that Ye will keep God's holy Will, and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of Your Lives. By this Ye engage, that Your outward actions shall always be agreeable to the inward persuasion of Your minds; and, that Your Faith shall not be dead, and unprofitable, but lively, active, and fruitful of good works. The Will, and Commandments of God Ye have likewise revealed to You in the Gospel of His Blessed Son; the Moral Law, given of old to the Jews, being there explained, improved, and adapted to the State of Mankind under the New Covenant of Grace, by Jesus Christ Himself.

IN the first place, Ye are not only to have the Lord for Your God, and none other besides Him, but, from numerous passages of the New Testament, Ye are taught, and commanded, to believe in Him, to fear Him, to love Him, with all Your heart, and all Your mind, with all Your soul, and with all Your strength; to worship Him, to give Him thanks; to put Your whole trust in Him, to call upon Him, to honour His holy Name and His Word; and to serve Him truly all the Days of Your lives.

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YE are commanded, not only to avoid the sin of Idolatry, or the worshipping of God under the form, and shape, of an Image, or the likeness of any thing, which is in Heaven, or Earth, but Ye are forbid, even in your inmost thoughts, to put any degree of confidence in any thing but the Goodness, and Power, of God, and the Merits of His Son Jesus Christ. And this Ye are forbid to do, upon the highest penalties; not the loss of temporal Blessings, or the bringing a Curse upon You, and Your children, but the eternal Perdition, and Destruction, of Your Souls, and a perpetual exclusion from the Kingdom, and Presence, of God hereafter.

YE are forbid to swear lightly, and rashly, by God's holy Name. And Ye are taught farther, that neither should Ye allow Yourself in swearing by any thing that is sacred, and bears a relation to God; That Ye should not swear by Yourself, or any part of Yourself, inasmuch as Ye are the creatures of God, and consecrated to His Service; nay, that Ye should not swear at all, at any time, or upon any occasion, unless Ye are called upon by proper authority to do so, for the ending of strife, or for any other important, and good purpose.

YE are commanded also to dedicate the Sabbath, or every seventh day of the week, to a rest from Your ordinary labours, because on that day God did finish the Creation of the World, and hallowed, or sanctified it, as a day of rest, to be perpetually observed by His People, the Jews. And, although it will always be
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Your duty, on account of the reasonableness of
 and God's Pleasure signified herein, to ob-
 serve and keep holy one day in seven, yet, as
 Your redemption was compleated by Jesus
 Christ's raising Himself from the dead upon the
 first day of the week, it seemed good to the
 Holy Ghost, and to the Apostles of our Lord,
 under His immediate influence, to transfer the
 holiness of the Sabbath from the seventh to the
 first day of the week, and to cause this altera-
 tion to be observed as an ordinance amongst all
 Christians for ever. Ye are taught moreover,
 and commanded, to dedicate this Christian Sab-
 bath, now called the Lord's Day, not only to a
 rest of Your bodies from the labours of Your
 callings, but of Your minds from all Your
 worldly concerns. Ye are bid to spend this
 holy day in the more immediate service, and
 worship of God; in prayer, in breaking of
 bread, or the receiving the holy Sacrament of
 the Lord's Supper, in meditation, in reading,
 in hearing the Word of God preached and ex-
 pounded to You, and in works of mercy, cha-
 rity, and piety.

THESE are the duties Ye are to discharge to-
 wards God. With regard to Your Neighbour,
 one another, Ye are called upon, in the first
 place, to pay due honour, and reverence, to
 Your Parents; To obey all their lawful com-
 mands; To submit to their corrections; and
 to comfort and succour them in their distress.
 Further, Ye are to be dutiful to Your Civil
 Parents, as well as Your natural ones; that is,

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Ye are to obey the Magistrates, which are set over You; not out of a dread of punishment but for the satisfaction of Your own conscience as They are the Ordinance of God, and appointed by Him to govern, and protect You. Ye are to be obedient also to Masters, Teachers, and Governors. In every station of life in short, Ye are to behave suitably to the subordination, in which Ye are placed; and exercise Your authority righteously, and in the fear of God, over all those, if any such there are, as are subordinate to You.

AGAIN, Ye are forbid to take away the Life of any Man, either secretly, or openly; either by acting Yourself, or by assisting others. Ye shall do no Murder. And not only so but, according to the Gospel explanation of this Commandment, Ye shall check and moderate Your anger, from whence Murder generally proceeds. For, if Ye let it transport You so far as to revile another with harsh speeches, Ye shall not be guiltless. Out of the Heart are the Issues of Life; that is, men Think, they generally Act; and if they do not Act accordingly, they are not always restrained by the fear of God, which ought to be one of the rules of their whole conduct. Ye are to see then that Your hearts be not evil; that no malice, envy, or revenge be suffered to harbour there; for He that Wills, or Wishes the death of another, with God, the Searcher of Hearts, is accounted no less guilty, than He had accomplished it.

THE same may be said of the next Commandment. For, although Ye are forbid to commit the act of Adultery only, yet, according to our Blessed Saviour's Interpretation of it, every inclination, or disposition of the mind towards it, is criminal. And therefore Ye are hereby obliged to keep Your minds, as well as Your bodies, in temperance, sobriety, and chastity. That is, Ye are to regulate even Your thoughts and desires, lest they finally lead You into sins of Uncleaness; Or, if they do not, yet the very entertainment of them in Your minds is offensive to God, and will compel His holy Spirit to leave You; who, Ye may suppose, will not dwell in such company, in so foul, and debauched an habitation.

FARTHER, Ye are forbid to steal; That is, to defraud Your Neighbour of his goods in any of the various ways, which the wickedness of mens hearts, has contrived to injure one another of their property. On the contrary, Ye are to be fair, and upright, in all Your dealings; to be careful to provide for Yourself, and Your families, by Your own labour, and pains, and to be thoroughly contented with that honest livelihood, which Providence has allotted You. If Ye seek any thing farther, it must be that Ye may have to give to others, and not for Your own use only. Nay, so far should Ye be from defrauding others, that, if Ye are defrauded Yourself, Ye shall not be over forward to recover Your just rights by Law. Ye shall be ready to forgive injuries of this kind,

as well as others, provided Ye are at liberty to do, and the consequences of Your forgiveness may not be hurtful to others.

AGAIN, Ye are forbid to bear false witness against Your Neighbour. That is, Ye are strictly to speak the truth concerning him, Ye are called upon as witnesses for, or against him, in a Court of Justice. In common conversation also, when there is a necessity of speaking of him, as there rarely is, Ye are to say nothing of him but what Ye know to be the truth, without any aggravations, or insinuations, which may hurt his good name. But as Christians, Ye are to judge no man; to be charitable in every thing Ye think or say of others; Ye are not to suspect any evil; Ye are to vindicate their characters, as far as Ye are able; and to preserve their Reputation, with the utmost tenderness, and care.

FINALLY, to secure the Observation of all the foregoing Commandments, which relate to Your Neighbour, Ye are forbid to entertain any unlawful desires, with regard to his House, his Wife, his Servants, and his Goods; That is, Ye are not to covet what is another's, but Ye are to be perfectly contented with what is Your own. And not only so, says the Gospel, but Ye are to be truly thankful for it, and acknowledge that is more than Ye deserve.

THIS is the substance of the Moral Law given of old to the Jews, and renewed, explained, and improved, for the use and practice of the whole Christian World.

BUT besides the Moral Law, contained in Ten Commandments, Ye are obliged as Christians, to obey those positive laws which our Blessed Saviour hath been pleased to add to them, and which do therefore more particularly belong to Your holy profession. These are the Commands, by which He hath appointed two Sacraments to be received in His Church, namely, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. The former, which hath been already explained, is the dipping in, or sprinkling with Water, at the time of Your entrance into Christ's Church, when Ye take the Vow of Christianity upon You. The latter is the eating bread, and drinking wine, as often as Ye have opportunity, in communion with Your fellow members of the Church, to preserve thereby a memorial of Christ's Death, until His coming again. And these Ye are to look upon, not as empty ceremonies, or as mere emblems of something else signified thereby; for our blessed Saviour has promised, that the receiving His Sacraments shall be accompanied by His especial Grace, whensoever it is done faithfully, and with a sincere and penitent Heart. That, as Your Bodies are sprinkled and cleansed with Water, so shall Your sins be washed away, and Your Souls purified by His holy Spirit. And, that, as by breaking bread, and pouring out wine. Ye do fitly represent His Body broke, and His Blood shed, upon the Cross, so shall Ye thereby ensure to Yourselves the benefits of His Death, which Ye so thankfully commemorate.

And, as Your bodies are strengthened and refreshed by the bread and wine, so shall Your Souls be comforted, and all the Christian Graces Ye are endowed with, be quickened and revived. As Ye have been already baptized into the Name of Jesus Christ, let me exhort You not to lose the Benefit of one Sacrament by a neglect of the other. For, be assured, that they are, both of them, equally necessary to the Salvation of Your Souls. If Ye do habitually absent Yourself from the Lord's Supper, it will but little avail You, that Ye have been admitted into his Church by Baptism. It will not be uncharitable to think of You, that Ye would have neglected Baptism, in like manner, had it been left to Your own choice, whether Ye would be baptized or not. For the same faith, and the same repentance, and purposes of a good life, are required of You to prepare for Baptism, as are necessary for the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper. And if Ye refuse to qualify Yourself for this, it may well be supposed that neither would Ye have qualified Yourself for that. So that, if no Person had brought You to Baptism, when Ye were Infants, and had undertaken, that Ye should fulfil the conditions of it, it is not improbable but Ye might have died unbaptized. Examine Yourself thoroughly, and see that Ye are perfectly sincere in this matter. For if Ye deceive Yourself herein, nothing can be of more fatal Consequence to Your Souls. Convince Yourself, and the world, that Ye
heartily

heartily embrace the terms of Your Baptism, by fulfilling the same terms in a frequent receiving of the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood. And let me advise You to enter upon this necessary Duty now, in Your younger years, as soon as Ye have informed Yourselves of what is required from those who come to the Lord's Table. For it is found by experience, that they who absent themselves from it whilst they are young, are not brought to it, without great difficulty, when they are advanced in years. Some are discouraged by the increasing burthen of their Sins; and others merely by the force of an evil habit, continue in a neglect of this duty. But, if Ye begin early to appear at the Lord's Table, Ye will escape both these delusions. Ye will neither be terrified by Your guilt, which as yet, it is to be hoped, is not very great; neither will Ye be seduced by an evil custom, which Ye have taken care to prevent. What is required of those, who come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Your Prayer-books will instruct You, being clearly and plainly expressed, in the Exhortation before the Communion Office. "Repent Ye truly for Your Sins past; Have a lively and stedfast faith in Christ our Saviour; Amend Your lives; Be in perfect Charity with all Men; And, above all, give most hearty thanks to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, for the Redemption of the World by the Death and Passion of our Saviour Christ; so shall Ye be meet
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“Partakers of those Holy Mysteries.” Ye may observe, that, in these words, there is nothing enjoined You, but what every Christian, at all times, is obliged to perform. When therefore this is called a preparation for the worthy receiving of the Lord’s Supper, nothing more is meant by it, but that, upon this occasion more particularly, Ye should examine Yourself, whether Ye do truly, and faithfully, perform what it is always Your duty to do. There is no new task laid upon You, as some People are apt to imagine, in preparing Yourself for the Holy Sacrament; only Ye are obliged to enquire into the State of Your Souls, and see whether Your Belief, and Practice, is such as becometh Christians. And can this be done too often? Can it be safely put off from time to time? Will not Your Sins daily encrease upon You, and the faster, because Ye neglect the Grace of God, offered to You in this Sacrament? and will not this Neglect add to the number? Will they not, many of them, when thus encreased, escape Your memory, and therefore not be particularly repented of? May Ye not be cut off in the midst of them, or disabled by sickness to recollect them? Surely there is no excuse can avail You at all, if these things are duly considered. I charge You therefore, as Ye hope for Eternal Salvation, to take every opportunity of receiving the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood. Judge Yourself, that Ye be not judged of the Lord. Draw near with
faith,

faith, and receive these pledges of the Love of Your Redeemer, to Your comfort. Offer to Almighty God this Your Sacrifice of Praise, and Thanksgiving; Yourself also, Your Souls, and Bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively, Sacrifice unto Him; humbly beseeching Him that, as Ye are partakers of this Holy Communion, Ye may be filled with His Grace, and Heavenly Benediction. So shall Ye be conducted by His Holy Spirit through the snares and temptations of this mortal State with safety: so shall Ye fully know, constantly bear in mind, and faithfully practise, every Christian Duty; so shall the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep Your hearts, and minds, in the knowledge, and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, shall be amongst You, and remain with You always.

THUS have I set before You all that Ye are to believe, and do, as Christians, in order to the attainment of Everlasting Life. But since the Nature of Man is such, at present, that Ye can do no good thing of Yourself, and that therefore Ye have need of the Divine Assistance in every thing, which relates to Your faith, and practice, I must farther put You in remembrance of the duty of constant Prayer. Without this, Ye are assured from many passages in Scripture, that all Your endeavours to be good will be accounted presumptuous, and therefore will have no effect. For Your entire dependance

ance is upon God, and Ye cannot, by Your own power, provide for the necessities either of Your Souls or Bodies. It is He who giveth You food and rayment, and all the necessities and conveniencies of Life. It is He also who puts it into our hearts both to will, and perform, what is acceptable and well-pleasing to Himself. If Ye can so far prevail over the corruption of Your nature, as to think humbly of Yourself, and to apply to the Throne of Grace for the supply of all Your wants, Ye are gone as far as, of Yourself, Ye are able to go. Thence forward Ye must use Your utmost endeavours, (the sincerity of Your hearts will require it of You) but they will not be effectual without the Blessing of God, which alone can give them success. You see then the absolute necessity of Prayer. In regard to which, the Church Ye more particularly belong to, hath provided You with a Publick Form, to be used as often as Ye meet together for the worship of God. It was composed by good and holy Men, as appears from that Spirit of true piety and devotion which breathes throughout the whole. Ye will do well therefore, in paying a due regard to it, and it will become You to lose no opportunity of joining in it devoutly in the Publick Church. It may be of service to You likewise in Your private Devotions, there being scarcely any one circumstance of Life, to which there are not Petitions properly suited in the Common-Prayer Book of the Church. But, because the ignorance, and weakness, of Mankind is such, that they

they can neither help themselves, nor do well understand the manner in which they may address themselves to God for help, it has pleased our Blessed Saviour to instruct His Church to pray, as they ought, in that short and perfect form, which is called by His Name. So that, however imperfect those prayers may be, which Ye make Yourselfes, or which good and devout Men have made for Your use, yet are Ye assured that Ye are provided with one Prayer, in which all Your wants are properly summ'd up, and which, if rightly offered, will not fail of meeting with acceptance.

In the Lord's-Prayer Ye address Yourselfes to Almighty God, who, through the mediation of His Blessed Son, vouchsafeth to be called Your Father, and the common Father of all Christians, although Ye worthily deserve to be punished for Your Sins, and to be utterly cast out of His favour. And although He is infinite, incomprehensible, and the whole Universe is filled with His greatness, yet, because His glory is manifested chiefly in Heaven, and from thence is revealed to the Children of Men, Ye are taught to call Him Your Father which is in Heaven.

Ye pray, or signify that it is, above all things, Your sincere and hearty desire, that, as His Name, (or His Being and Attributes) is holy, fearful, and glorious, so it may be sanctified, revered, and adored, by all Men, in every place, and throughout all generations, for ever. That Yourselfes more particularly may have
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Your hearts cleansed, and filled with His grace that, in all Your thoughts, words, and actions, Ye may endeavour to promote His honour and Glory.

FOR the better accomplishment of this Your sincere desire, Ye pray, that God's Kingdom may come; That the knowledge of His holy Name may be spread throughout the whole world; That the dominion of Sin, and Satan may be entirely destroyed by the Light of Christ's Gospel; and that the blessed time may not be delayed, when Ye, with all those who have died in His faith, and fear, shall be translated into His Heavenly Kingdom.

YE pray, that, in the mean while, God's holy Will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven. That is, Ye declare, that Ye are entirely resigned to all the dispensations of His good Providence, and are ready to do, and suffer, every thing, which cometh of His Divine appointment. That Ye willingly, and heartily submit to all the rules, and methods, which He hath commanded You to walk by. And although it may be impossible for You ever to attain to such a perfection of obedience, in this present Life, yet it is Your sincere wish, and desire, that Yourselves, and all Men, throughout the whole world, were enabled to perform the Will of God, with the same readiness, and the same exactness, as it is performed by the Angels in Heaven. That as these blessed Spirits, the Messengers of God, do speedily, and cheerfully, execute all His commands, so His faithful ser-

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wants on earth, as far as the infirmities of their flesh will permit them, may constantly, and gladly, obey Him in all things.

AFTER thus professing, that Your chief concern is for the advancement of God's honour and glory, Ye proceed in Your Petitions, by begging of Him to give You this day Your daily bread. Hereby Ye humbly acknowledge, that all things depend upon His gracious Providence; that the eyes of all creatures look up to Him, who giveth them their meat in due season, and provideth them with all things, out of His bounteous liberality. Therefore Ye beseech Him to give You also all the necessities, and conveniences, of life: Which, although Ye are allowed to call them *Your* daily bread, are not Yours of right, but come of the free bounty of God, and by His blessing upon Your labours. Ye pray, that he would continue to bless them; that neither Ye, nor Your families, may ever be in want of what He may judge necessary, or proper, for Your support. And, by thus confessing that Your whole reliance is upon His goodness, and mercy, Ye oblige Yourselfes to return Him all possible thanks, and praise, for the manifold blessings Ye daily receive at His hands.

FARTHER, Ye beseech God to forgive You Your trespasses, to blot out all Your sins, and release You from the punishment of them, as Ye forgive them that trespass against You. That is, although Men's forgiveness of each other bears no proportion to the forgiveness they

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stand in need of from God, yet, as it has pleased God to make this a necessary condition of Your being forgiven, Ye do humbly hope, that, if Ye are in perfect charity with all men, and do truly repent You of Your sins, Ye shall meet with pardon at the Throne of his Grace. At the same time, Ye do hereby declare, that Ye have no hopes of pardon, unless Ye fulfil this condition; and do engage therefore to forgive others their trespasses, so far as is consistent with God's laws, and the preservation of peace, and order, in the world.

BUT, lest Ye should meet with trials in this or any other respect, too strong for You to encounter, Ye beg of God, not to lead You into temptation, but to deliver You from evil. Ye make it Your humble request, that Ye may not be seduced from Your obedience either by prosperity, or afflictions; that, whatsoever station of life it may please God to appoint You to, and in whatsoever circumstances Ye are placed, Ye may, by the help of his Grace, steadily pursue Your duty, and do nothing unbecoming Your Christian profession; That Ye may not be permitted to yield to the delusions of the flesh, the world, or the devil; but that Ye may be strengthened by the holy Spirit of God against all these Your enemies, and being protected from their power, may pass the whole course of Your lives with integrity and innocence.

FINALLY, Ye declare, that Ye are firmly persuaded that Ye ought to offer all Your prayers and praises to God only; that Ye do not, in any degree,

degree, trust in Yourselves, or in any other creature, for the success of Your petitions; but that God, and God alone, can, and will, Ye humbly hope, relieve all Your wants, both spiritual and temporal; For His is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. He is the absolute Governour of the whole Universe, the Almighty disposer of all events; He can do whatsoever he will, and nothing is brought to pass in heaven, or earth, without His Permission.

Ye conclude all by saying, *Amen*. Whereby Ye express Your earnest desire, that God would be pleased most graciously to grant whatsoever Ye have asked; And, at the same time, Ye signify Your humble confidence in Him, that, through the merits, and mediation of Jesus Christ, this Prayer of His blessed Son will be heard, and accepted, by Him.

THIS then is the Prayer, which our blessed Saviour has left, for the use of His Church, and every particular Member of it. So that it is impossible Ye should err, when Ye address Yourself to God in this form of words, or in any form agreeable hereto. Let it be Your constant care so to order Your thoughts, and actions, that Ye may be always in a capacity of using it. For otherwise Ye will provoke God's anger against You by Your rashness, and presumption, and bring a curse upon Yourself, instead of a blessing. Approach Him not therefore with this Prayer, unless Ye are sincere in Your desires, and endeavours, that Yourself, and all Mankind, may be obedient to His Will; and that

his name may be revered, and His glory exalted, throughout the whole earth. See that Ye do not entertain in Your minds a dependance upon any thing, but the goodness of God, for the relief of all Your wants. Be ready to forgive injuries, and lose no opportunity of doing good to all Men. Trust not to Your own strength, in the many trials, and temptations, incident to this Your mortal state, but be assured that it is God alone, who can protect You from the snares of this world, and the subtilty and malice of Your Ghostly Enemy. Finally, be persuaded that all Power is in God only; that no evil can harm You without His Permission, no good befall You, but by His Grace, and favour: For He ruleth over all things for ever, and ever: As His Authority has no bounds, so will His Kingdom, and Glory, never have an end.

THUS have I briefly, and plainly, set before You the whole duty of a Christian; putting You in remembrance of what Ye ought to believe, and do, in order to be saved. It is my hearty prayer to God for You, that by His Grace, He would enable You to practise it in truth and sincerity. And I intreat Your Prayers for me also, that I may do the same, that, if it so pleaseth God, we may mutually receive benefit from each other. Here Ye have the substance of all, that has been, or will be, preached to You; and I send it to You summed up in this little Book, that Ye may have it always before Your eyes, and by often reading it, may imprint it deeply in Your memories. I address it chiefly
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to You, who are of the younger sort, because, at Your first setting out in the world, Ye have need of a Guide to direct You in the right way; Because Ye are not entered, or, at least, not far gone I hope, in the path that leadeth to destruction; and more particularly, because Ye live in dangerous times, when Ye have few good examples, but many, very many, bad ones, before You, and therefore are more likely to be seduced. I am sorry I have occasion to observe any thing, which is to the discredit of the present Age, but most certain it is, that, in every station of life, the manners of Men are greatly corrupted. And not only so, but many seem to grow slack in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and some to have totally forsaken it. Who knows but God may put it into Your hearts seriously to consider the present unhappy state of Christ's Church, and incline You to use Your utmost endeavours to reform it! At least He may enable You to order Your own lives as Ye ought, and, by preserving You from infection in Your younger years, it may so happen that the succeeding generation may be better than the present. This seems to be the only hope which is now left us; and for your own sakes, for the sake of Mankind, for the sake of Virtue and Religion, and for Jesus Christ's sake, do not disappoint it.

Be strong, and courageous, and dare to be good, under all the present disadvantages of Virtue and Piety. Pursue no other pleasure but that of innocence, which alone can give you

true satisfaction, and peace of mind. Be prudent in regard to Your best and dearest interest; and, above all things, be wise for Your own Souls. Forget not Your obligations to Him, in whom Ye live, and move, and have Your being; and let Your thoughts perpetually dwell on that lively hope of eternal happiness, to which Ye are begotten through Christ Jesus. Think with Yourselfs, that, although Ye may live many years, yet it is not impossible that Ye may be cut off in a few days; that, be Your lives ever so long, yet are they really short, and will appear to You much shorter, as they approach to an end; That Ye cannot therefore begin too early to be good, neither will it be safe for You to lose the present opportunity. Consider how many thousands there are, who, reflecting upon their past conduct, would give the whole world, if it was at their disposal, to be in Your time of life. If they were suffered to begin their days again, how watchful would they be over themselves, how cautious of offending God in any one action, or thought! Every wilful Sin they have formerly committed, is now as a Viper in their bosoms, the sting of which leaves a smart not to be endured. The infirmities of old Age are tolerable enough to them, but a wounded Spirit who can bear! Such though will be Your condition, wretched as it is, if Ye are guilty of the same folly, and tread in their steps. Learn from their examples to make a good use of the present time; and, if Ye are sensible, as Ye must needs be, of their unhappy

unhappy case, take effectual care that, one time or other, it may not be Yours also. How will Ye condemn Yourselfs hereafter, if Ye are so unwise as to lose the present opportunity, which cannot be retrieved? Ye will then reflect with sorrow upon Your evil course of life, and stand amazed at Your own folly in neglecting this good advice.

WHEN the time of Your departure out of this world shall draw near, which way will Ye look for comfort, or what will Ye do to be at peace with Yourselfs? If Ye turn Your eyes upon Your past lives, Ye will find nothing there but what will give You grief and vexation. And, if Ye look forwards, how terrible will be the prospect of God's anger, whom Ye have made it Your business to offend? If Ye do repent, yet how shall Ye be thoroughly satisfied that Your repentance is sincere? It may proceed from a wrong cause, and therefore will avail You nothing. It may proceed from an incapacity, or disrelish, of some Sins, and the want of opportunity to commit others. It may arise from the dread of punishment only, not from any good dispositions of mind, or from a conviction of Your faults. A late repentance therefore, instead of the satisfaction which is proposed by it, will be attended with perplexity and doubt. But, on the other hand, a well-spent life, proceeding from early habits of virtue, and goodness, will leave no room to question the sincerity of Your obedience, but will lay a foundation for a reasonable hope, that God will

will be favourable to You. Ye will have the pleasure of thinking, that Ye made it Your first choice to do His Will, and were not compelled to it by Your natural fears and apprehensions; that Ye kept Your innocence, when Ye were courted, bribed, and importuned on all sides, to part with it; that Ye never entered into the service of Sin, and therefore have no title to its wages.

BUT in what language can I describe to You the joy and transport, which attends the conclusion of a regular and good life? When the time approaches that Ye shall be called upon to give an account to God, how will it delight You to think, that it has always been Your sincere endeavour to obey His Will? What pleasure will it be to reflect upon the dangers Ye have escaped, the evil Ye have forborn, and the good Ye have done? That I had led a better life, is and ought to be, the wish of every man, good as well as bad, when He comes to die. But whilst the old Sinner reproaches himself with neglect of every duty, Your consciences will bear You witness, that, from Your youth up Ye have endeavoured to fulfil the Commandments of God. Hence will Ye be encouraged to look forward also with an humble hope, that through the merits of Christ Jesus, Ye shall be accepted of Him. Death, it is true, is such a Change, as Ye cannot but be oftentimes thoughtful and solicitous about. But remember; that the sting of Death is Sin; and when it is once disarmed, the terror of it is much abated.

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Good Men therefore, for the most part, die with perfect resignation, and satisfaction of mind. Nay we sometimes meet with instances of such as express great joy in the exchange of this Life for a better. And Ye will do the same, if Ye order Your conversation according to my advice. For what can harm You so long as Ye are at peace with God; Although Your Souls are separated from Your Bodies for a time, yet nothing can separate You from the love of God. Ye cannot be removed beyond the reach of His Mercy and Loving Kindness. It will follow You through every State, and uphold and comfort You in every Change Ye undergo.

BUT, after Death, there will be no farther Change; Your Condition then will be fixed for ever. *When Christ, who is Your Life, shall appear, Ye shall also appear with Him in Glory.* Col. iii. 4. *It is Your Father's good pleasure, little Flock, to give You the Kingdom.* Luke xii. 32. *For there is laid up for You a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give You in that day, and not to You only, but to all them who love His appearing.* Tim. ii. 4. 8. *Blessed be the God, and Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us.* 1 Pet. ii. 3. 4.

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To be used by a

Y O U N G P E R S O N
E V E R Y M O R N I N G.

O Almighty God, I give Thee most humble thanks, for that Thou hast been pleased to preserve me from the dangers of the night past: Defend me this Day, I beseech Thee, from all evil Accidents, and more especially from all temptations to sin. Let all my doings be ordered by Thy Governance, and let me ever remember, that my most secret thoughts, and actions, are before Thee, and open to Thy sight. That so I may always walk in Thy fear, studying to serve, and please Thee, in all things; and may be continually protected by Thy goodness here, and taken to Thy mercy hereafter, through the merits, and mediation, of Jesus Christ, my Advocate, and Redeemer. *Amen.*

P R A Y E R

To be used by a

Y O U N G P E R S O N

E V E R Y N I G H T.

O Almighty God, I give Thee most humble thanks for Thy merciful preservation of me this day. I beseech Thee to pardon me in every thing, wherein I may have offended Thee, and to give me Thy Grace, that I may never do the like again. I thank Thee for all Thy mercies vouchsafed unto me from the beginning of my Life to this present time; for my health, food, and raiment, and more particularly my friends, and relations, whom I beseech Thee to bless, and reward, for all their care, and love, towards me. I commit myself to Thy gracious protection this night, humbly begging that Thy good providence may continue always to watch over me. And grant that I may so order the whole course of my life, that I may finally inherit thine everlasting kingdom, through the merits of Jesus Christ my blessed Saviour, and Redeemer. *Amen.*

